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Knowledge Management in the Light of Organizational Factors

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Abstract
The purpose of this paper is to find out the relationship between knowledge management and organizational factors that are organization culture, human resource practices and leadership in an organization. Cross-sectional and quantitative tactic is used in this study. Questionnaires are used to gather the respondent's views. Kendall tau-b rank correlation coefficient, one-way ANOVA and linear regression are used for testing hypothesis and conceptual model. The results of the analysis show that individual variables (organizational culture, human resource practices and leadership) significantly affect the dependent variable (knowledge management).
Keywords: knowledge management, organizational culture, human resource practices, leadership organizational factors.

1.Introduction

In current years it is identified that intangible assets can help in gaining competitive advantage for an organization (Remco and Dennis, 2009). Organizational knowledge has attained great attention in the last decade as intangible asset. Now a days knowledge is considered as akkey factor for organizational success (Jimenez-Jimenez, &Sanz-Valle, 2012).

Petersen and Poulfelt (2002) argue that to achieve and maintain competitive edge the organization have to build, apply and share knowledge through knowledge management. Post industrialism and globalization are the causes of increase and development of knowledge management in management practices to compete and sustain in the market (Edvardsson, 2008).

For the enhancement of organizational performance and efficiency knowledge management is considered to be the vital tool (Zack et al., 2009).

In the research paper relationship of knowledge management with the culture, human resource practices and leadership is being measured by analyzing employee's responses. The paper gives a complete theoretical background of the relationships of the organizational factors with knowledge management. The paper assists in better understanding of knowledge management in the organization. It tells about the significance of knowledge management. It helps in knowing the ways in which the process of knowledge management can be made better.
The paper provides managers a chance to get a better insight of knowledge management and the factors that affect it. The managers can improve their processes and create an environment which encourages knowledge creation and transfer. The paper facilitates the practitioners to conduct researches in this domain. This will serve as a guideline or basis for critique in future studies.

1.1 Research Objectives

The study comprises of three objectives:

- To improve the understanding of knowledge management by evaluating its strengths, concepts, weaknesses and importance.
- To determine relationship between knowledge management and organizational culture.
- To enhance theunderstanding of concepts of human resource practices and leadership and their role in the knowledge management process in the organization.
- To provide the suggestions and adoptingenvironment in the workplace to the management about knowledge management.

1.2 Hypotheses

The hypothesis under study is
H_0: greater emphasis on knowledge management by organizational factors (organizational culture, human resource practices and leadership) will lead to a greater amount of knowledge management activities among employees.

2.Literature Review

The exploration of knowledge management is deepened in current years as it is recognized as an essential component in organization success (Albors-Garrigos et al., 2010). Organization can get more market share by using the knowledge it possess in an effective way thus having more competitive advantage (Machuca& Costa,

2012).

The significance of knowledge management has increased radically because of technological enhancement, globalization and to gain finest practices in the organization to flourish and have competitive advantage (Mehta, 2008).

In today's vibrant, multifaceted and global business environment human resource and knowledge management are considered as key factors of competitive advantage. Knowledge and people are linked to each other and cannot be separated. Human beings can think and create knowledge; no organization can do it without them as they don't have the capacity to think. People in the organization should be given significant importance as they are the knowledge creator along with knowledge bearer and transmitter. Knowledge and people are directly linked with each other that are if the organization wants to have better knowledge management in the workplace than they have to make their human resource practices accordingly. The success of knowledge management is also dependent on the process through which it is initiated and implemented in an organization (Oltra, 2005).

Information culture is the one that encourages the employees to share information and use it to enhance the organizational performance. Information is used in the managerial and operational decision making to increase product utility and acceptability in the market. Information system enables the firm to gain maximum market share by responding to the environmental changes. Information can only be useful if the source is trusted along with the employees trust that they would be encouraged and appreciated. Trust factor is related to both organization and employees if one side is lacking trust on the other party that means the information system is neither appropriate and nor going to work. Trust can be built in the organization by building characteristics like openness, competence, integrity, coherency and reliability in the organizational culture (Oliver, 2008).

Li and Scullion (2006) argue that culture is considered to be the most appropriate variable that influences the process of knowledge transfer. Globalization has made the organization work in different parts of the world because of it the organization have to see the culture of the country they are working in and align their processes accordingly. Cultural differences sometimes create barriers in knowledge transfer as their might be some things that are acceptable in one society but not in other or the way of doing a task is contrasting in the two cultures (Qin, Ramburuth& Wang, 2008).

Knowledge management is dependent on culture of organization as it defines how employees will acquire, retain and process information within the organization. Ironically organization culture is considered to be the biggest obstacle in the process of knowledge management. Organizational culture is currently defined as a combination of values, procedures, communication patterns and leadership style which are dominant and affects the management decision making and operations in the organization (Rai, 2011).

Human resource practices in an organization plays significant role in assisting employees to share, transfer, absorb and create knowledge. Knowledge management refers to all the activities which involves generation, application and sharing of knowledge. Knowledge management deals with the expansion and exploitation of the organizational knowledge assets for broadening its objectives. All types of knowledge are managed ranging from documented, explicit to subjective, tacit knowledge (Theriou&Chatzoglou, 2008).

The significance of human resource practices is highlighted by many authors in knowledge management and the point that people matters require to be progressed to central phase of rational about information. Knowledge management success relay on the human resource practices in an organization as it is considered as basic factor of it. Any process success in an organization is dependent on the employees as their contribution and motivation is required for its implementation. In the same way knowledge management is also dependent on highly motivated employees for its success. Especially tacit knowledge can only be transferred if the employee possessing it wants to share and transfer it to others (Theriou&Chatzoglou, 2008).

People enthusiasm to share knowledge with others depends on many factors that are present in an organization along with the human resource practices (Hislop, 2003).

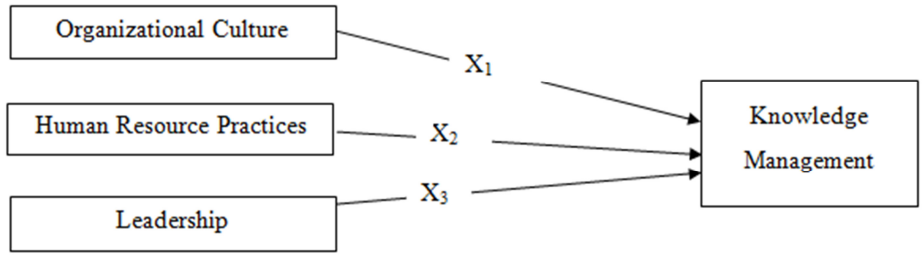
The capability of a person to lead a group of employees for achieving organizational goals is called leadership. In knowledge management activities organizational leadership plays a vital role. Leaders deliver mission, vision, system, structure and motivation to employees to share knowledge for gaining competitive advantage (Ooi, The & Chong, 2009).

The knowledge leader part is to deliver strategies, visions, reduce communication barriers, motivate employees and should be an example for others to carry out information process. Leader should tell their employees the goals they want to achieve through knowledge management and transfer. They should make themselves available for the employees in the process so that if they are facing any problem they can help them. Moreover they can well explain the importance and procedures to be followed to attain the bigger goal (Singh, 2008).

3.Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of the study for testing the validity of hypothesis

The theoretical model proposed for testing hypothesis is as follows:



Where; X_1, X_2 andX_3 represent the individual variables of study.
There are three independent variables in this study on the basis of which we prove our main hypothesis that is problem statement, (1) organizational culture; (2) human resource practices; and (3) leadership. Each of the variable have direct impacts on the dependent variable i.e. knowledge management in the organization.

4.Methodology

The objective of the research is to understand the relationship between the knowledge management practices and organizational factors. To explore and understand the research thoroughly the research has been divided in to five categories. This is a basic research aims to enrich existing body of knowledge in the knowledge management discipline. This research consists of three individual variables and there direct effect on the dependent variable. This study is quantitative in nature as survey method is used which proposes to accumulate the responses of a huge amount of people in squat time and budget. A quantitative research is the "Research techniques that seek to quantify data and, typically, apply some form of statistical analysis". Quantitative method has its own weakness. This methodology requires a large number of samples to represent a certain population. According to some writers it cannot get deeper meanings compared to qualitative processes in which "subconscious feelings", "complex phenomena" and sensitive answers could be explored (Malhotra& Birks, 2007).

Data can be collected in different ways and it depends up on the nature of the research (Ericksson&Kovalainen, 2008). To identify the purpose and the objectives of the research data is gathered through both secondary and primary sources.

Before collecting Primary data the researcher should focus on conducting and analyzing appropriate secondary data to successfully address the research problem. The secondary data includes academic literature and computerized database (Patel. el at,2006). The literature review for this research was accessed through different journal articles as they are reliable and trustworthy and some of the text books. Journal articles were utilized because it provides concise information regarding theories, methodology, application and interpretation relevant to paper. (Lee et al, 2008).

4.1 Instrument

Questionnaireis adopted from the study of Donate &Guadamillas (2011). 29 questions were taken from their questionnaire to collect and analyze the variables under study. The questionnaire has five parts.Seven scale likertscale is used to evaluate the views of the respondents. The responses ranges from 1(strongly agree) to 7 (strongly disagree).

The first section contained questions relating to ordinal and nominal scale, to gather the basic information about the respondents. The second section comprises of seven questions asking respondents about their views of knowledge management. The third part includes seven questions about the organizational culture. The fourth part consists of six questions about human resource practices. The fifth part incorporates six questions about the effects of leadership.

4.2 Participants

Another important part of the research is to identify the target population and selection of sample. It is important to determine who and how many people should be interviewed. Sample is a part of the target population, carefully selected to represent that population (Berwick, 2003).
The frame of sample is closely linked to population. Population contains all the elements of sample (Constantino. et al., 2003).

In this research the two hundred respondents are selected from different backgrounds, gender and education level. A sampling unit is the subject of examination on which the results are deduced. The sampling unit is the guarantee that the results are accurate (Hitzig, 2004).

The people working in any organization are the sample of this study. There is no limitation of the

industry or organization as we want to find the general trends of knowledge management process. The sample of 200 respondents is theunit of analysis.

The information gathered from sample is raw data. The first important step is to see the answers chosen by each respondent. This provided a complete record of the discussion and helped in the analysis of the data.The examination of the data was done with the help of 'SPSS'software. Spearman Rank Correlation is used to measure non-parametric association between two variables and outputs were attained in terms of r_s or ρ (rho). Variables are not differentiated as dependent and independent and linear relationship along with distinction of ratio or interval scale is not necessary for it.The estimator is represented below:

$$\rho = 1 - \frac{6\sum d_i^2}{n(n^2-1)}$$

A non-linear relationship between the organizational factors and knowledge management is most likely to exist because the variables are qualitative in nature and measured in ordinal scale.

To increase the validity of the results obtained through rank correlation, Kendall's Tauis also measured as it is particularly used for ordinal scale and non-identical in magnitude. Its value is normally less than rank correlation and is more trustworthy for confidence intervals. Fascinating insights can be into the study by it if inconsistencies exist on a large scale. The estimator is presented below:

$$\tau = \frac{(number\ \ of\ \ concordant\ \ pairs) - (number\ \ of\ \ discordant\ \ pairs)}{\frac{1}{2}n(n-1)}$$

After estimation of significant relationship between organizational factors and knowledge management and their interdependence. Then after transforming the data in quantifiable form linear regression can be estimated to further strength results of the study. It gives another perspective to the study by allowing quantitative analysis between the independent variables (organizational factors) and dependent variable (knowledge management)

4.3Estimator

$$\hat{Y} = \hat{\beta}_0 + \hat{\beta}_1 X_1 + \hat{\beta}_2 X_2 + \hat{\beta}_3 X_3$$

Where:

$\hat{Y}$ = Dependent Variable (knowledge management)

X_1 = Organizational Culture

X_2 = Human Resource Practices

X_3 = Leadership

5. Limitations and Delimitations

There are few limitations of this study. First, the sample size was so small that the results of the study cannot be generalized to the entire population. Second, some of the respondents might lack the ability to understand the questions in the survey, thus answering the questions incorrectly. Third and fourth constraints were related to time and money respectively. Fifth limitation was that it was difficult to determine that whether the respondents have given sincere answers to the questions. Sixth and the last limitation is that no research has ever been conducted on this issue in Pakistan. So there was no availability of researches in the Pakistani context. If this research is conducted in future, the sample size should be considerably large in order to increase the generalizability of the study.

6. Results and Discussion

The sample contained almost equal male and female respondents that is male are 51% whereas females are 41% of the total sample. The percentage for groups of age of the respondents were almost equal that is the data is spread over each group and there is representation of every age thus generalizing the results for age. The education of the respondents was also collected. Most of the respondents hold Bachelor's degree with 36.5%

followed by the Master's degree holder that is 35.5%. The data tells about the variety of respondents that were taken as a sample so that everyone working is represented.

The statistics from table 1 represents Kendall tau-b correlation was estimated to be 0.906 with a $p<0.01$. This shows that there is a strong positive relationship between organizational culture and the knowledge management. Therefore, the first individual variable in the model is accepted to have a significant effect on the dependent variable.

The projected consistent coefficient for 'organizational culture' (X_1) turned out be ($\hat{\beta}_1 = 0.335$) attained from the linear regression model (see table). Hence there is positive casual association between organizational culture and knowledge management in an organization as portrayed in the model. Further it can be said that a comparable increase by 1 unit in the insight of organizational culture will on the average cause a surge in the development of knowledge management by 0.335 units (as here no reference index is set). The T-test statistics for them depicts a T value = 7.528 at a significance level at $p<0.01$, which indicates that organizational culture and knowledge management process are not independent of each other and that organizational culture (X_1) is an important predictor for knowledge management.

Comparative to Kendall tau-b correlation coefficient the outcomes from Spearman Rank correlation coefficient was assessed to be high at 0.956 with significance level at $p<0.01$. This also shows a strong positive correlation between knowledge management and organizational culture. Though, variables in the study were ordinal and both the coefficient can be viewed as weighted averages of concordance indicators. It would be safer to report estimates obtained from Kendall tau-b as reported above because they have been estimated after taking into the account the error in prediction of knowledge management.

The statistics from the table 2 represent that Kendall tau-b correlation coefficient was estimated to be 0.812 with a $p<0.01$. This shows that there is a positive relationship between the human resource practices and the process of knowledge management. Therefore, it can be said that knowledge management process can be affected by human resource practices.

The projected consistent coefficient for human resource practices (X_2) turned out be ($\hat{\beta}_2 = 0.617$) attained from the linear regression model (see table). Hence there is positive casual association between knowledge management and human resource practices as portrayed in the model. Further it can be said that a comparable increase by 1 unit in the insight of human resource practices will on the average cause a surge in the development of knowledge management by 0.617 units (as here no reference index is set). The T-test statistics for them depicts a T value = 10.860 at a significance level at $p<0.01$, which indicates that human resource practices and knowledge management are not independent of each other and that human resource practices (X_2)is an important predictor for knowledge management.

Comparative to Kendall tau-b correlation coefficient the outcomes from Spearman Rank correlation coefficient was assessed to be high at 0.902 with significance level at $p<0.01$. This also shows a strong positive correlation between knowledge management and human resource practices. Though, variables in the study were ordinal and both the coefficient can be viewed as weighted averages of concordance indicators. It would be safer to report estimates obtained from Kendall tau-b as reported above because they have been estimated after taking into the account the error in prediction of knowledge management.

The statistics from the table 3 represent that Kendall tau-b correlation coefficient was estimated to be 0.711 with a $p<0.01$. This shows that there is a positive relationship between the leadership and knowledge management process. Therefore, the significant relationship between independent and dependent variable is proved.

The projected consistent coefficient for leadership (X_3) turned out be ($\hat{\beta}_3 = 0.035$) attained from the linear regression model (see table). Hence there is positive casual association between leadership and knowledge management as portrayed in the model. Further it can be said that a comparable increase by 1 unit in the insight of leadership will on the average cause a surge in the development of knowledge management by 0.035 units (as here no reference index is set). The T-test statistics for them depicts a T value = 0.711 at a significance level at $p<0.01$, which indicates that leadership and knowledge management are not independent of each other and that leadership (X_3)is an predictor for knowledge management.

Comparative to Kendall tau-b correlation coefficient the outcomes from Spearman Rank correlation coefficient was assessed to be high at 0.815 with significance level at $p<0.01$. This also shows a strong positive correlation between knowledge management and leadership. Though, variables in the study were ordinal and both the coefficient can be viewed as weighted averages of concordance indicators. It would be safer to report estimates obtained from Kendall tau-b as reported above because they have been estimated after taking into the account the error in prediction of knowledge management.

As all of the independent variables (organizational culture, human resource practices and leadership)

have significant effect on dependent variable (knowledge management) so the hypothesis of the study is accepted.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

The estimated coefficient is significant which proves that the model is strongly fit for the data having coefficient of determination r^2 =0.913 with a significance F stat = 687.589, p <0.001.

The presence of these variables in the model (X_1, X_2, X_3) cause 91% of the variation in the knowledge management process which means stochastic factors cause variation by 9% only. There is a strong causation between the organizational factors and knowledge management because of the higher coefficient value (adjusted r^2 = 0.912).

The results show thatknowledge management process is affected by the organizational culture. Knowledge management activities will not be effective if the culture of the organization does not support creation and sharing of knowledge. Organizational success, survival capacity and effectiveness are dependent on organizational culture. It is the asset of an organization that should be given the ultimate importance because it can be the cause of success and vice versa. The organization that focuses on knowledge management creates an open, collaborative and adaptive culture. It encourages its employees to give their suggestions and ideas so that the processes can be made better. Thus, increasing the productivity and gaining competitive advantage (Machuca& Costa, 2012).

Human resource practices also have a direct relationship with knowledge management. Employee's creation, sharing, gaining and transfer of knowledge largely depend upon the human resource practices in the organization. Training, evaluation and rewards can significantly affects one's interest of participating in knowledge management activities. The appreciation and compensation given to the employees, who not only possess knowledge but also transfer it to other. This can increase motivation in the employees to take part in knowledge management activities (Theriou&Chatzoglou, 2008).

Leadership plays a significantrole in knowledge management process. The leaders can influence knowledge management activities in an organization as they have power and can effects the organizational process. They can create and maintain an environment in which employees can share their thoughts and information that are productive and bring advantages to the organization (Nguyen & Mohamed, 2011).

The study brings an understanding for mangers in the organizations in examining complex human behaviors and increases their intangible assets. It helps them in understanding the importance of organizational factors and their impacts on knowledge management. The managers will know that only tangible assets are not enough to gain competitive advantage rather intangible assets have equal importance. The managers gain a better insight of the environment which they want to create in their organizationand the ways they want to deal with their employees.

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Appendix

Descriptive Statistics

Statistics

		Gender?	Age?	Education?
N	Valid	200	200	200
	Missing	0	0	0
Mean		1.4900	2.3700	2.1350
Std. Error of Mean		.03544	.08215	.05832
Median		1.0000	2.0000	2.0000
Mode		1.00	1.00	2.00
Std. Deviation		.50115	1.16183	.82473
Variance		.251	1.350	.680
Skewness		.040	.154	-.039
Std. Error of Skewness		.172	.172	.172
Kurtosis		-2.019	-1.440	-1.093
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.342	.342	.342
Range		1.00	3.00	3.00

Frequency Table

Gender?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	102	51.0	51.0	51.0
	female	98	49.0	49.0	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Age?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	22-30 years	64	32.0	32.0	32.0
	31-40 years	45	22.5	22.5	54.5
	41-50years	44	22.0	22.0	76.5
	51-60 years	47	23.5	23.5	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Education?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Intermediate	52	26.0	26.0	26.0
	Bachelor's	73	36.5	36.5	62.5
	Master's	71	35.5	35.5	98.0
	Doctorate	4	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Inferential Statistics

Nonparametric Correlations for X1 (TABLE 1)

Correlations

			OrganizationalCulture	KnowledgeManagement
Kendall's tau_b	OrganizationalCulture	Correlation Coefficient	**1.000**	**.906****
		Sig. (2-tailed)	**.**	**.000**
		N	**200**	**200**
	KnowledgeManagement	Correlation Coefficient	**.906****	**1.000**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	**.000**	**.**
		N	**200**	**200**
Spearman's rho	OrganizationalCulture	Correlation Coefficient	**1.000**	**.956****
		Sig. (2-tailed)	**.**	**.000**
		N	**200**	**200**
	KnowledgeManagement	Correlation Coefficient	**.956****	**1.000**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	**.000**	**.**
		N	**200**	**200**

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Nonparametric Correlations for X2 (TABLE 2)

Correlations

			KnowledgeManagement	HRPractices
Kendall's tau_b	KnowledgeManagement	Correlation Coefficient	**1.000**	**.812****
		Sig. (2-tailed)	**.**	**.000**
		N	**200**	**200**
	HRPractices	Correlation Coefficient	**.812****	**1.000**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	**.000**	**.**
		N	**200**	**200**
Spearman's rho	KnowledgeManagement	Correlation Coefficient	**1.000**	**.902****
		Sig. (2-tailed)	**.**	**.000**
		N	**200**	**200**
	HRPractices	Correlation Coefficient	**.902****	**1.000**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	**.000**	**.**
		N	**200**	**200**

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Nonparametric Correlations for X3 (TABLE 3)

Correlations

			KnowledgeManagement	Leadership
Kendall's tau_b	KnowledgeManagement	Correlation Coefficient	**1.000**	**.711****
		Sig. (2-tailed)	**.**	**.000**
		N	**200**	**200**
	Leadership	Correlation Coefficient	**.711****	**1.000**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	**.000**	**.**
		N	**200**	**200**
Spearman's rho	KnowledgeManagement	Correlation Coefficient	**1.000**	**.815****
		Sig. (2-tailed)	**.**	**.000**
		N	**200**	**200**
	Leadership	Correlation Coefficient	**.815****	**1.000**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	**.000**	**.**
		N	**200**	**200**

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Linear Regression Model

Variables Entered/Removed[a]

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Leadership, OrganizationalCulture, HRPractices[b]		.Enter

a. Dependent Variable: KnowledgeManagement
b. All requested variables entered.

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	7262.913	3	2420.971	687.589	.000[b]
	Residual	690.107	196	3.521		
	Total	7953.020	199			

a. Dependent Variable: KnowledgeManagement
b. Predictors: (Constant), Leadership, OrganizationalCulture, HRPractices

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	**.956[a]**	**.913**	**.912**	**1.87642**	**.913**	**687.589**	**3**	**196**	**.000**

a. Predictors: (Constant), Leadership, OrganizationalCulture, HRPractices

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Fraction Missing Info.	Relative Increase Variance	Relative Efficiency
		B	Std. Error	Beta					
1	(Constant)	**2.370**	**.406**		**5.831**	**.000**			
	OrganizationalCulture	**.372**	**.049**	**.335**	**7.528**	**.000**			
	HRPractices	**.980**	**.090**	**.617**	**10.860**	**.000**			
	Leadership	**.047**	**.065**	**.035**	**.711**	**.000**			

a. Dependent Variable: KnowledgeManagement

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